

Law Day 2010: Law in the 21st Century

Emerging Challenges and Enduring Traditions

The concept of natural law, or the standards of justice given to every human even without the existence of man-made law, date back to ancient Greek philosophers. In the founding of our country, Thomas Jefferson incorporated some of these ideals when he drafted the Declaration of Independence and included the phrase - "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal,

◆ Human Rights ◆

"The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the first and only object of good government."

Thomas Jefferson,
3rd President of the United States

that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness."

Likewise, the first ten Amendments of the U.S. Constitution,

also known as the Bill of Rights, established as law some of these rights and freedoms.

Globally, the United Nations (UN) is one of the groups championing the cause of human rights worldwide. The UN defines human rights as, "...rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible." Several examples of these rights include life, liberty, equality before the law, economic, social and cultural rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was first adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 10, 1948. In total, there are eight ratified international human rights treaties established by the United Nations. All UN member nations have ratified at least one of these core treaties, and 80% have ratified four or more. Equal rights for all humanity is the ideal; the work to ensure it continues.

Newspaper Activities:

- ◆ Locate articles, editorials or political cartoons that show citizens being treated fairly and equally under the law. As a class, discuss how this coverage might be different without the Civil Rights Act or other laws.
- ◆ Now look for articles, editorials or political cartoons showing people that are denied equal or fair treatment. Are these examples local, national or international? As a class, brainstorm potential legal solutions to these inequalities.

◆ Human Rights ◆

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Likewise, the first ten Amendments of the U.S. Constitution, also known as the Bill of Rights, established as law some of these rights and freedoms. Globally, the United Nations (UN) is one of the groups championing the cause of human rights worldwide. The UN defines human rights as, “...rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible.” Several examples of these rights include life, liberty, equality before the law, economic, social and cultural rights.

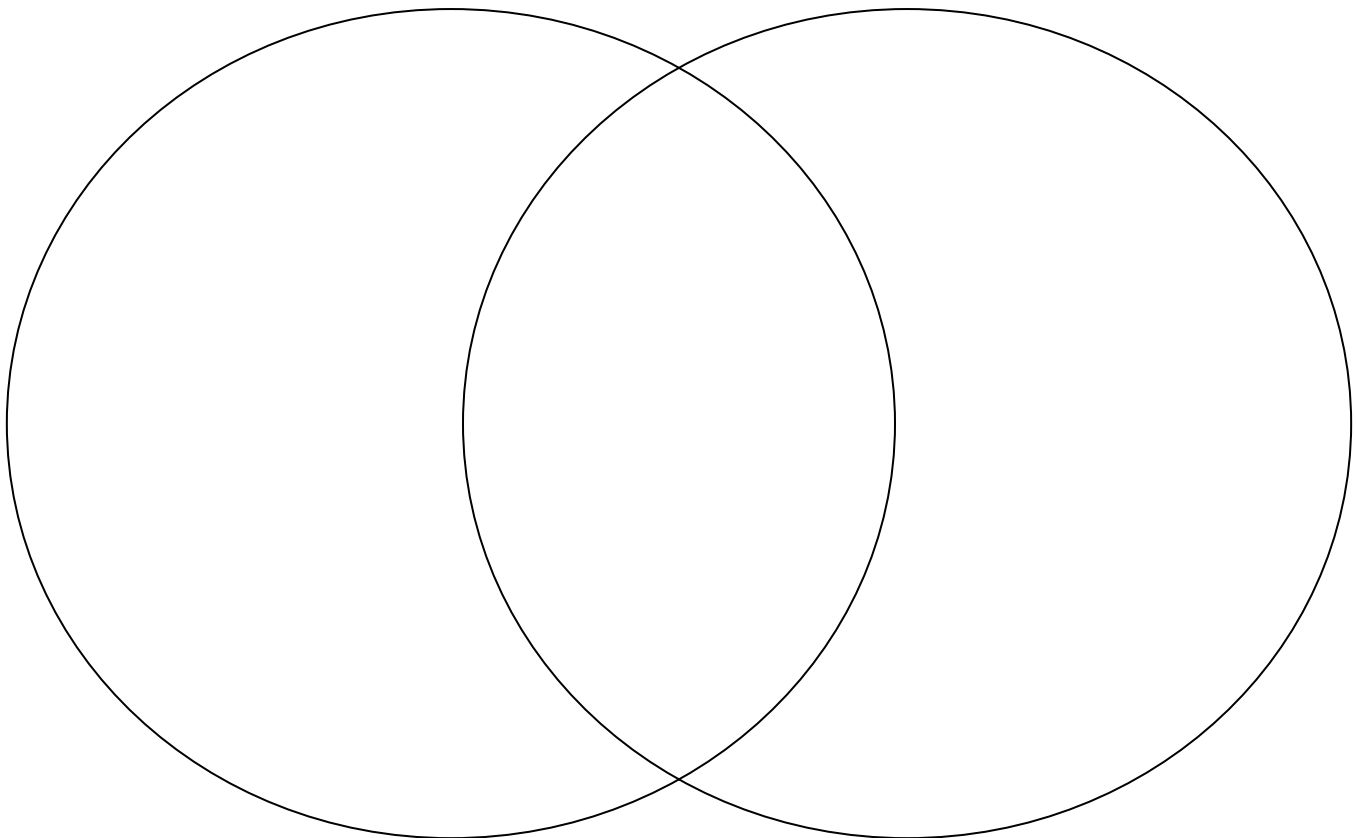
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Newspaper Activity 1:

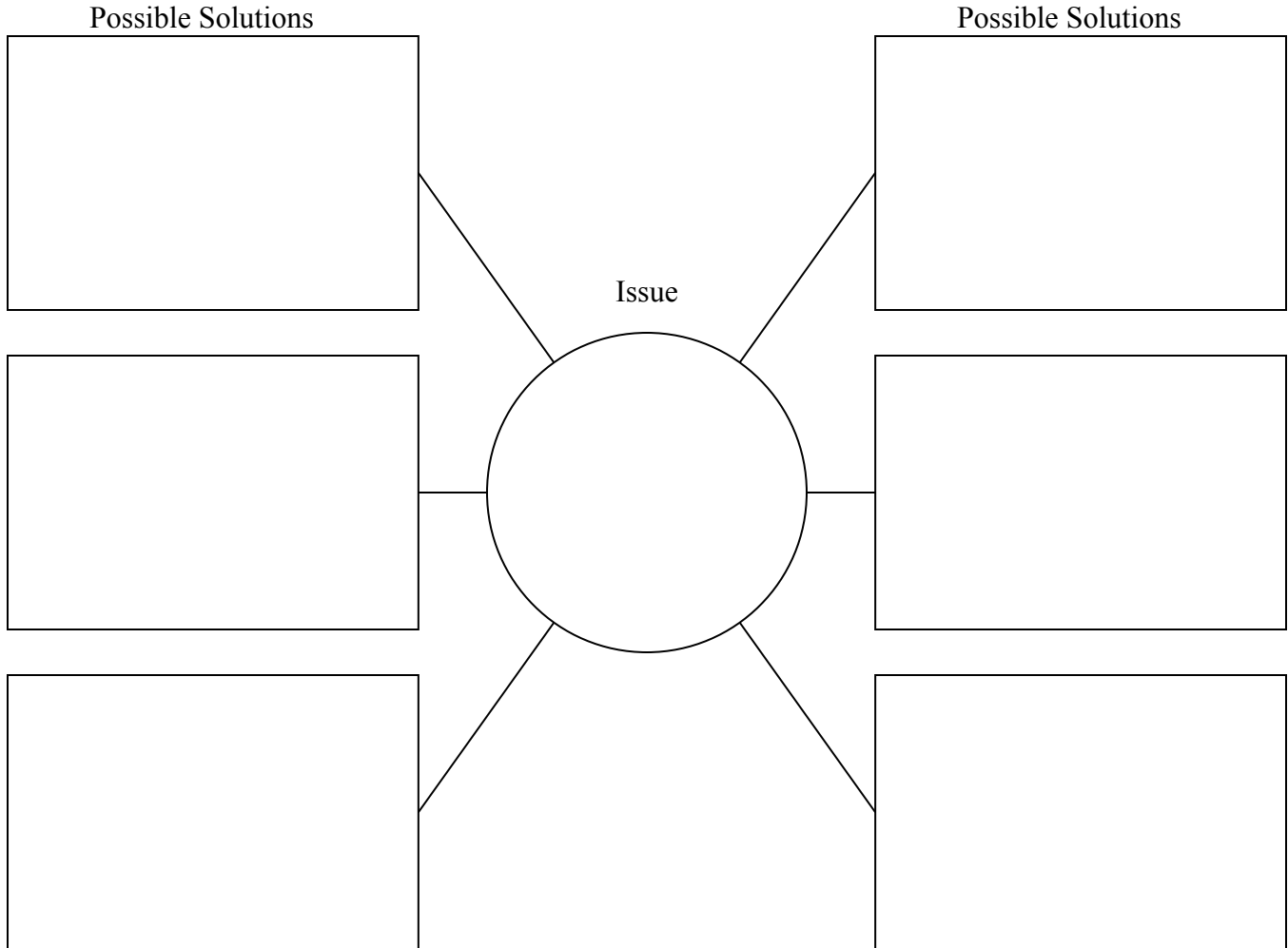
Locate articles, editorials or political cartoons that show citizens being treated fairly and equally under the law. As a class, discuss how this coverage might be different without the Civil Rights Act or other laws. Use the Venn diagram above to compare and contrast the way citizens were treated during different times in our nation’s history. (i.e. the present vs. 1940s, 1860s)



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Newspaper Activity 2:

Now look for articles, editorials or political cartoons showing people that are denied equal or fair treatment. Are these examples local, national or international? As a class, brainstorm potential legal solutions to these inequalities. Use the chart below to organize your thoughts.



Of the possible solutions, is there one that seems better than the rest? Why? _____
